

(Washington, DC) - Congressman Wally Herger today expressed disappointment with the Democratic majority's refusal to consider a permanent ban on Internet taxes. Herger voted in favor of H.R. 3678, which extends the current moratorium for an additional four years, but strongly believes such taxes should be banned for good. The moratorium on federal, state, and local taxation of Internet access, first enacted by Congress in 1998, is scheduled to expire on November 1. Herger issued the following statement regarding today's action:

"I am very disappointed that the Democratic leadership prevented the House from voting on legislation supported by most in Congress that would ban Internet taxes permanently," Herger stated. "The United States ranks only 15th among developed countries in access to high-speed Internet services, and we are falling further behind. In particular, Americans living in rural areas like Northern California often lack access to broadband, despite its increasing importance to our economy. A critical element of our national broadband policy must be maintaining the tax-free status of Internet access.

"I voted for the short term extension because it is essential that Congress not allow the moratorium to expire. However, in order to maximize investment in broadband networks so that they reach every American, we need to make the ban on Internet taxes permanent. Because of the majority's use of procedural tactics to block a permanent ban, consumers will have to remain vigilant to ensure that a future Congress does not open the door to taxes on their Internet connections," concluded Herger.